

**GENDER-BASED STRATEGIES IN EXPRESSING GRATITUDE IN  
ENGLISH REALIZED BY INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS**

*Strategi Berbasis Gender dalam Ungkapan Syukur dalam Wujud Bahasa Inggris oleh  
Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris dari Indonesia*

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan strategi syukur yang digunakan oleh pelajar perempuan and laki-laki EFL Indonesia dalam berbagai situasi akademis. Data yang dikumpulkan berasal dari 85 mahasiswa S1 dari Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Brawijaya di Malang, dengan menggunakan Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT) dari O’Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs (2011). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan keberagaman strategi syukur yang berdasarkan taksonomi Chen, Ho, & Yang (2005) dan yang digunakan oleh partisipan dari kedua gender. Keberagaman strategi syukur ditunjukkan dengan adanya variasi berupa panjang-pendek dan kompleksitas sikap berterima kasih. Seluruh partisipan menyampaikan kumpulan tindak tutur ucapan terima kasih, yang terjadi pada situasi sebagai berikut: a) status sosial (mahasiswa dan dosen), b) hutang budi (meminjamkan uang ke mahasiswa), c) melanggar janji (datang terlambat ke acara presentasi), d) bersama teman-teman (menghadiri seminar proposal), dan e) di area publik (mempersilahkan mahasiswa menggunakan lift terlebih dahulu). Terungkap pula dalam penelitian ini bahwa kedua gender menunjukkan keberhasilan dalam mengekspresikan rasa syukur mereka terhadap lima konteks akademis yang telah dibuat oleh peneliti.

**Kata Kunci:** berterima kasih, gender, pelajar EFL Indonesia, strategi syukur, syukur

**Abstract:** The goal of this study is to depict the gratitude strategies utilized by Indonesian EFL female and male students in responding to various academic situations. The data were gathered from 85 undergraduate students of English Literature, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Brawijaya University in Malang using Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT) from

*O’Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs (2011). The results show the diversity of gratitude strategies based on Chen, Ho, & Yang’s (2005) taxonomy and used by the participants from both genders, varied from brief, lengthy, to complex thanking acts. All participants delivered mixed sets of thanking speech acts, explained in the following conditions: a) social status (students and lecturers), b) indebtedness (lending money to students), c) breaking promises (coming late to presentations), d) between friends (attending the proposal seminar) and e) the setting of public area (letting students to enter the elevator first). It is also revealed that both genders were successfully expressed their gratitude in responding to the five academical contexts made by the researcher.*

**Keywords:** gender, gratitude, gratitude strategy, Indonesian EFL learners, thanking

## INTRODUCTION

Gratitude is one of an expression in speech that used in many situations. Indonesian students who learn English as a foreign language are already familiar with the phrases for expressing gratitude, such as thanks, thank you, thank you so much, and thank you very much. Thanking or gratitude is defined as an illocutionary act (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986, as cited in (Yoosefvand & Rasekh, 2014) at which the speaker shows a feeling of gratitude toward the hearer based on the past act. Saying thank you could be a problem for L2 learners since they might have limited knowledge on the appropriate time and way to express gratitude in the target language culture (Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988). It is often assumed that since gratitude is a basic expression taught from an early age, all language learners can perform the gratitude successfully in the target language.

Different situations are also related to how to express gratitude. Since this study took place in an academic situation, the learners are usually using a very polite strategy when they are talking in English as a foreign language to their lecturer or older people. Aside from cultural differences, gender differences have shown a contribution to gratitude expression. Mills (2003) points out that gender could be playing a significant role in the appropriateness in different situations and that gender and politeness relationship is even more complex compared to cultural factors. Thus, this condition has motivated the researcher to examine gratitude expressions used by Indonesian female and male EFL

learners in academic situations. This can help to identify whether there are differences between the two genders in expressing gratitude in formal situations. Also, the researcher wanted to reveal the common gratitude strategies realized by Indonesian EFL learners, thus, there is the possibility to overcome L2 learner's problems in expressing gratitude.

Commenting on gratitude expressions, some experts such as Brown & Levinson (1987) consider that "in uttering sentences one is also doing things but we must first clarify in what ways in uttering a sentence one might be said to be performing actions" (p. 236). Language speakers in any community can express gratitude through words of thanks, praise, compliment, or appreciation (Pishgadam & Zarei, 2011). Eiseinstein and Bodman (1986) point that thanking phrases is often preceded by or followed by other strategies or speech acts such as apologizing, requesting, promising, etc. depending on the context. Expressing gratitude is also often realized by simple thanking without any lengthy expressions.

To sum up, this study attempts to investigate the following problems:

1. What are the common gratitude strategies realized by Indonesian female EFL learners in English in academic situations?
2. What are the common gratitude strategies realized by Indonesian male EFL learners in English in academic situations?
3. How do Indonesian female and male EFL learners differ in the expression of gratitude?

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Speech Acts**

Austin (1962, as cited in Cutting, 2002) defines speech act as actions that are performed in saying utterances. Speech act theory was developed from the philosophers' opinions mentioning that a sentence is meaningless unless its truthfulness and falsity can be tested, called *declarative/constatives* sentences, and a sentence where a sentence having the first-

person pronoun as the subject; present tense, active construction; and adverb, called *performatives* sentences. A *performative* verb is a verb whose actions are explicitly encoded such as *apologize, declare, name, proclaim, warn, agree, disagree*, and many others.

Austin (1962) admits that an utterance does not necessarily need performative verbs in order to be performative since empirical data prove that performatives can be performed in cruder devices and less explicit. These devices consist of mood, adverbs, particles, and intonations. The *performatives* sentence with these devices is called *implicit performatives*. It is then can be concluded that the performatives verb is not the only device to construct a performative sentence. Austin (1962) then sums up that the dichotomy between performatives and constatives is not relevant since empirical data prove that all utterances perform specific actions even though they literally do not reflect actions. He believed that in saying something one is performing three acts simultaneously:

1. Locutionary act or locution is the literal meaning of an utterance.
2. Illocutionary act or illocution is the force or the act behind an utterance. It can be either the act of making statements, disagreeing, agreeing, promising, and many others.
3. Perlocutionary act or perlocution, is the bringing about the effects of doing illocutionary act.

### **Gratitude Strategy**

The gratitude strategies examined in this study are based on the 8 strategies in Chen et al., (2005, as cited in Yoosefvand and Rasekh, 2014) taxonomy. Researchers convinced that there are a big chance of people expressing gratitude alongside with other strategies, thus, making the gratitude statement more confirming to the speakers. Below are the explanations of those gratitude strategies:

- 1) *Thanking*

Participants say “thank you” in three ways:

- a. Thanking only by using the word “thank you” (e.g. Thanks a lot! Thank you very much!)
- b. Thanking by stating the favor (e.g. Thank you for your help!)
- c. Thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor (e.g. Thank you for helping me collect the papers.)

2) *Appreciation*

- a. Using the word “appreciate” (e.g. I appreciate it!)
- b. Using the word “appreciate” and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor (e.g. I appreciate the time you spent for me)

3) *Positive feelings*

- a. By expressing a positive reaction to the favor giver (hearer) (e.g. You are a life saver!)
- b. By expressing a positive reaction to the object of the favor (e.g. This book was really helpful!)

4) *Apology*

- a. Using only apologizing words (e.g. I’m sorry)
- b. Using apologizing words and stating the favor or the fact (e.g. I’m sorry for the problem I made!)
- c. Criticizing or blaming oneself (e.g. I’m such a fool!)
- d. Expressing embarrassment (e.g. It’s so embarrassing!)

5) *Recognition of imposition*

- a. Acknowledging the imposition (e.g. I know that you were not allowed to give me extra time!)
- b. Stating the need for the favor (e.g. I try not to ask for extra time, but this time I need it!)
- c. Diminishing the need for the favor (e.g. You didn’t have to do that!)

6) *Repayment*

- a. Offering or promising service, money, food or goods (e.g. Next time it's my turn to pay!)
- b. Indicating indebtedness (e.g. I owe you one!)
- c. Promising future self-restraint or self-improvement (e.g. It won't happen again!)

7) *Others*

Expressions that do not belong to the above strategies are categorized as other strategies. There are four subcategories under the other strategy:

- a. Here statement (e.g. Here you are!)
- b. Small talk (e.g. Your face is very familiar to me but I can't remember where I saw you. What do you study?)
- c. Leave-taking (e.g. Have a nice day!)
- d. Joking (e.g. Don't forget to pay again next time)

8) *Attention getter*

In the thanking situations, attention getter and address term are likely to occur in the same utterance. The alerters include:

- a. Attention getter (e.g. Hey, Hi, Well)
- b. Title (e.g. Dr., Professor! Sir!)
- c. Name (e.g. John, Mary)

### **Gender-based Strategies**

Holmes (2013) has utilized the term *gender* rather than *sex* since *sex* has indicated categories recognized by biological characteristics, while *gender* is more fitting for distinguishing individuals on the premise of their socio-cultural behavior, including speech. The discussion of gender in this study centers to a great extent on contrasts between empirically observed features of women's and men's speech. Contrasts in

women's and men's speech are another source of variation which can result in linguistical change. In some cases, women are the trend-setters, driving a linguistical change, and sometimes men. Women tend to be related with a change towards both prestige and vernacular norms, while men more frequently present vernacular changes.

### **Indonesian EFL Learners**

Hinkel (1994) investigated the cultural differences in the attitudes toward the speech act of gratitude expression. The results revealed that there are differences in perception of the appropriateness of certain thanking expressions between non-native English language groups and native English speakers. This supports the learners to be motivated to imitate numerous American English phrases, words, and sentences for the benefit of their second language acquisition. In other words, they are those whose first language is not English and who learn English as a foreign language (McWhorter, 2016). In this study, these learners indicated the Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners.

### **Literature Review**

Dalilan (2012) is one of researchers who focused on gratitude expression investigation in Indonesian EFL learners. In his study, all of the participants produced mixed thanking speech acts sets under the following condition: a) social status (between vice-president and newly hired personnel, b) indebtedness (because of money loan and meal treat), and c) breaking promise. However, the participants showed the tendency of saying brief gratitude in informal contexts. The participants who contributed to this study were 17 undergraduate students of the English Department of Education Faculty of Atmajaya Catholic University in Jakarta. The study specifically used Discourse Completion Tasks by O'Keeffe et al., (2011). The findings reported various strategies applied from simple, brief, lengthy, to complex thanking expressions.

Meanwhile, Yoosefvand and Rasekh (2014) conducted their study on Persian

native speakers. They examined the strategies of gratitude expression employed by Persian native speakers in different situations. They found that female and male Persian speakers used different strategies in expressing gratitude. The participants were 30 males and 30 females chosen from the population of BA and MA students at Kermanshah Islamic Azad University in Iran. Similar to Dalilan (2012), the researchers also used DCT to collect the data. The result of their study suggested that the female Persian speakers use gratitude strategies more than the male speakers. Kashdan, Mishra, Breen and Froh's (2009) study also provides the depiction of gender in gratitude expression. In their study, they found that men's expression of gratitude is less familiar, and more discomforting compared with women's. In conveying gratitude, men are shown to have more challenging expression, provoking anxiety and strengthens social bonds.

To conclude, the findings in the previous studies indicated that non-native speakers of English produce thanking expressions in English by using various strategies that may be either similar or different from those of native speakers of English. The diversity of contexts in the situation and cultural values are likely to be the factors causing the differences within the use of gratitude strategies. Reflecting on those previous studies, there are still gaps regarding the gender, situation, and politeness studies in the context of Indonesia. Therefore, this condition motivated the researcher to investigate the gratitude expressions conveyed by female and male Indonesian EFL learners. In addition, this study also wanted to examine if Indonesian female and male EFL learners differ in the expression of gratitude based on academic contexts designed by the researcher.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study is descriptive qualitative research that implemented its value based on the premise that problems can be solved, and practices improved through observation, analysis, and description. The most common method of descriptive research is the survey, which includes questionnaires and interviews. The data source of this study was obtained



from 85 participants consisting of 45 females and 40 males. They were the students of the English Literature of the Faculty of Cultural Studies of Brawijaya University in Malang, East Java. They were identified as EFL learners who already in the eighth semester and their ages ranged from 20 to 23 years old.

The data of this study were in the form of written responses by the participants. Using the Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs), the participants were given descriptions of situations and asked to elicit what they think they would say in a given situation (O’Keeffe et. al, 2011). The DCTs in this study situated the participants to respond with thanking expressions with every expression as they wish. There were 5 different academic situations given to the participants. Then, they were instructed to write responses showing the expression of thanking and possible sets of thanking speech acts they may think to write for each situation.

Those 5 situations depicted in the DCTs were adopted from the questionnaire items (14 items) summarized by Eisenstein and Bodman (1993, pp. 75–76). Each situation set the participants in different contexts or events related to their daily life. The contexts carried in this study were a) social status (a lecturer asks the student to give a speech in guest lecture), b) indebtedness (a lecturer willingly lend his/her money to a student), c) breaking promise (a student had promised to come on time for the presentation, instead he/she comes late), d) between friends (how to thank friends for attending her/his proposal seminar), and e) the setting of public area (a lecturer pleased a student which is in a hurry, to go down first by using elevator). The data collection was gathered on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 from online Google forms.

In the next step, the data from DCTs were analysed in several steps. First, the researcher put and categorized the data into the table based on the participants’ gender. Second, the differences of saying gratitude strategies in English were explained based on Chen et al., (2005) taxonomy between Indonesian females and males EFL learners in academic situations made by the researcher. Last, the conclusion then can be drawn based

on the findings and the result of the discussion.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As previously explained, the analysis of the data was done by applying the taxonomy from Chen et al., (2005). The taxonomy is beneficial to describe the common gratitude strategies as well for the explanation of the common gratitude strategy realized by Indonesian female and male EFL learners. The results are presented in the form of tables followed by descriptions and discussions regarding the phenomena found in the Indonesian female and male EFL learners.

In the first situation in Table 1 and 2, the context positioned the participants as a volunteer of a guest lecture. This situation has a familiar context as the participants' daily academic life dynamics. Another context depicts a specific room to do a guest lecture in one building that constitutes a formal area in the academic social environment and the relationship between the lecturer and the volunteers is also formal.

**Table 1. Female Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 1**

*You are the volunteer of guest lecture. The lecturer calls you onto the front of the room. He asks you to give a brief of speech. You feel a little nervous, because it is the first time for you. The lecturer says, 'You're doing a good job. In fact, we are so pleased with you that I am going to give you a raise'.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Thank you for the compliment, I (really) appreciate that, Ma'am	12	Thanking by stating the reason+Expressing appreciation
2	Thank you (Sir/Ma'am)	5	Thanking
3	Thank you, Sir/Ma'am. It means a lot for me (that's very nice (kind) of you)	4	Thanking+Complimenting
4	Thank you for the opportunity. I'll do better next time.	4	Thanking by stating the reason+Promising

5	Oh I really don't deserve this, but thank you for appreciating me. I'll do so much better next.	4	Expressing indebtedness+Thanking by stating the reason+Promising
6	Thank you for giving me this opportunity	3	Thanking with intensifier by stating the reason
7	Thank you for trusting me Ma'am	3	Thanking by stating the reason
8	Thank you Sir/Ma'am, I really appreciate that	3	Thanking+Expressing appreciation
9	Oh really?! Thank you! I will do better next time.	3	Expressing surprise+Thanking+Promising
10	Thank you so (very) much Sir/Ma'am	2	Thanking with intensifier
11	I am so honored with the chance that I have been given, this humbled me, thank you so much, Sir.	1	Stating appreciation with the reason+Complimenting+Thanking with intensifier
12	Thank you for giving me such an amazing opportunity, but also sorry because this is my first time and I feel a little bit nervous.	1	Thanking by stating the reason+Expressing sorry by stating the reason
Total of Production		45	

**Table 2. Male Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 1**

*You are the volunteer of guest lecture. The lecturer calls you onto the front of the room. He asks you to give a brief of speech. You feel a little nervous, because it is the first time for you. The lecturer says, 'You're doing a good job. In fact, we are so pleased with you that I am going to give you a raise'.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Thank you very (so) much, I appreciate that	20	Thanking with intensifier+Expressing appreciate
2	Thank you sir, I am so honored to be here. I hope I can do better next time.	8	Thanking+Stating appreciation with the reason+Promising
3	Thank you for the chance you gave (for having me)	4	Thanking by stating the reason
4	Thank you (thanks)	3	Brief thanking

5	Thank you, Ma'am/Sir. I will do my best next time.	3	Thanking+Promising
6	Okay Ma'am, thank you so much	1	Thanking with intensifier
7	Oh, I'm still learning on this thing, but thank you, Sir!	1	Stating the reason+Thanking
Total of Production		40	

In the Situation 1, the female participants frequently express gratitude by producing thanking and expressing appreciation. Most of the participants combined their gratitude expression with speech act sets such as complimenting, expressing surprise and indebtedness, promising, and apologizing. The expression of gratefulness to the lecturer in this situation reflected the feeling of politeness and respect from the participants. The lengthy expression of the gratitude strategies is also common to be found in Indonesia.

While in the male participants, half of them expressed the act of thanking with intensifier by also expressing the act of appreciation. They felt pleased to contribute as the volunteer of guest lecture and to be appreciated by the lecturer. Some participants also stated the act of thanking followed by the act of appreciation and promising and very few of them expressed thanking by stating the reason. Unlike the female participants, the male participants are most likely to use the less lengthy expression in the act of thanking.

**Table 3. Female Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 2**

*In the cafeteria, you meet one of your lecturers. You find yourself in sudden need of money Rp.20.000,- to pay your bills. Your lecturer immediately offers to lend it to you. You are surprised and very grateful. At first you say, 'Oh no, I didn't mean it. I can cancel my bills.' Your lecturer says, 'Really, it's all right.' Your lecturer insists again, and you take the money.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Thank you Sir/Ma'am, I will pay back soon.	18	Thanking+Repayment
2	Thank you so much Ma'am	11	Thanking with intensifier

3	I'm so sorry for that. I will pay it back soon. Thank you for lending me some money.	7	Apologizing+Repayment+Thanking by stating the reason
4	Thank you very much for lending me your money, Sir/Ma'am.	5	Thanking by stating for the reason
5	I don't know what I would say, it's embarrassing me. I'm very careless, Sir. I'm very grateful to meet you, Sir. I promise next time I'll return your money	2	Expressing indebtedness+Expressing delight+Repayment
6	Thank you for your help! God bless you always.	1	Thanking by stating the reason+Praying for goodness
7	Thank you Ma'am/Sir for your kindness, but I cannot accept that	1	Thanking by stating the reason+Refusing
Total of Production		45	

**Table 4. Male Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 2**

*In the cafeteria, you meet one of your lecturers. You find yourself in sudden need of money Rp.20.000,- to pay your bills. Your lecturer immediately offers to lend it to you. You are surprised and very grateful. At first you say, 'Oh no, I didn't mean it. I can cancel my bills.' Your lecturer says, 'Really, it's all right.' Your lecturer insists again, and you take the money.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Thank you Sir/Ma'am, I will pay back soon.	15	Thanking+Repayment
2	Thank you so much Ma'am	6	Thanking with intensifier
3	Thank you Sir, you're so kind	4	Thanking+Complimenting
4	Thank you	4	Brief thanking
5	Thank you Ma'am (Sir), I really do appreciate your help	4	Thanking+Expressing appreciation
6	No, you don't have to Sir (Ma'am), I can borrow to my friends. Thank you.	3	Refusing with stating the reason+Thanking
7	Thank you very much for lending me some money	3	Thanking by stating the reason

8	Perhaps thank you isn't enough for you to have helped me. So if you, Professor, have something important to get done, you can ask me to help you if you please.	1	Thanking intensifier+Repayment	with
Total of Production		40		

Tables 3 and 4 represent the result of thanking act in Situation 2. In this situation, the context is described as in a public area with a formal relationship between speakers. The tables show the act of thanking followed by intensifier and repayment is the most common strategy that occurred in the female participants. It is implied that from the participants' cultural perspective, stating repayment and apologizing can indicate the expression of gratitude. This is a very common situation in Indonesia when someone, especially a lecturer, generously lends money, in this case, to the students, they will surely feel indebted. The feeling of indebted thus motivates the students to continue to another act, which is promising to return the money even though the lecturer has conveyed their willingness by not wanting back the money.

Seen from the gender perspective, the researcher found that both female and male participants have the same responses in the Situation 2. The male participants also present their gratitude to the lecturer and offer the repayments for the lecturer's money. The result of this situation is in contrast with Yoosefvand & Rasekh (2014) findings that denote the more use of gratitude strategies by female speakers than male speakers. The rest of the participants expressed complimenting, the act of appreciation, thanking with intensifier, thanking by stating the reason, and brief thanking as Pishgadam & Zarei (2011) said that "Language speakers in any community can express gratitude through words of thanks, praise, compliment, or appreciation".

**Table 5. Female Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 3**

*You are late for the presentation, yet you promised a friend of yours that you will come on time. You thank her for telling the lecturer that you are going to be late.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Hey I'm real sorry that I'm late. Thanks for giving me an excuse though. You're the best	18	Apologizing+Thanking by stating the reason+Complimenting
2	Sorry for coming late, I had something urgent. Thank you for telling the lecturer for me	5	Apologizing by stating the reason+Thanking by stating the reason
3	Thank you! I owe you one but I promise next time it won't happen again	5	Thanking+Repayment+Promising
4	Thanks for covering me, mate.	5	Thanking by stating the reason
5	I'm sorry it won't happen again. Thank you for telling that I was late.	4	Apologizing+Promising+Thanking by stating the reason
6	Thank you, mate.	3	Thanking
7	You're a life saver. What would I do without you?	2	Expressing positive feelings+Complimenting
8	Oh my god, sorry. But thank you for telling the lecturer that I'm late :( but yeah again sorry I didn't mean to	1	Expressing surprise+Apologizing+Thanking by stating the reason+Apologizing
9	You are really helping me out from my situation.	1	Complimenting
10	Hey, thanks! I'll make it up to you for sure.	1	Thanking+Stating Compensation
Total of Production		45	

**Table 6. Male Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 3**

*You are late for the presentation, yet you promised a friend of yours that you will come on time. You thank her for telling the lecturer that you are going to be late.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	I'm really sorry for breaking my promise. Thanks for telling the lecturer that I'm late.	12	Apologizing by stating the reason+Thanking by stating the reason
2	I'm sorry, that won't happen again	8	Apologizing+Promising

3	I am (so) sorry for the problem I made	6	Apologizing by stating the reason
4	Thank you, my friend. Next time, I will not coming late and come on time.	4	Thanking+Promising
5	Thank you	4	Brief thanking
6	I could not have imagined a better help than you, my friend. I'll be there as soon as I can. Thanks for helping me.	3	The expression of diminishing the favor+Promising+Thanking by stating the reason
7	God damn it, I'm really sorry, I really am for coming late my friend. Thank you so much for telling the lecturer, we would have lunch together and bills on me.	2	Swearing+Apologizing with stating the reason+Thanking by stating the reason+Repayment
8	Aaa I'm sorry, I'm late. Because I have to help my mother goes to hospital every early Monday and I forgot to tell you. Thanks for telling the lecturer. I will invite you to my home we can eat together and talk about this one with my mom.	1	Apologizing by stating the reason+Thanking by stating the reason+Repayment
Total of Production		40	

In the Situation 3, the responses of participants are presented in Tables 5 and 6. The context given is a relationship between close classmates in a class. It is shown that most of the participants expressed the act of repayment following the act of thanking. They tried to enhance their relationship with the hearer after being asked to tell the lecturer that the participants are going to be late. Brown and Levinson (1987, as cited in Koutlaki, 2002) have classified thanking as a face-threatening act in which the speaker feels obliged to acknowledge a debt to the hearer.

The responses in the Situation 3 show the prevalent act of apologizing before thanking. These strategies then are followed by several kinds of strategies such as stating the reason, complimenting, and promising by offering turn. There are also gratitude expressions without apologizing strategy but speech acts sets such as stating



compensation, complimenting, promising, repayment, and stating the reason. Other variations of thanking acts in this situation are positive feelings and compliments instead of saying “thank you”. This is aligned with Dalilan’s (2012) statement, where strategies applied ranged from simple, brief, length, to complex thanking. Thus, it can be inferred that the addition of apologizing strategy in this situation is probably caused by the guilty feeling of breaking the promise. The participants reflected their Indonesian culture by showing excessive regrets after breaking promise.

**Table 7. Female Participants’ Responses, and Strategies in Situation 4**

*It’s your proposal seminar day. You thank the participants which also your friends for coming to the room.*

Participants’ Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Before we start the presentation, thank you for coming into this proposal seminar. It means a lot for me	23	Thanking by stating the reason+Complimenting
2	Thank you for attending this seminar, I truly appreciate all the time and efforts for everyone to be here	8	Thanking by stating the reason+Expressing appreciation by stating the reason
3	I appreciate all of you for taking your time to be here today.	7	Expressing appreciation by stating the reason
4	Thank you so much for coming! God bless you!	4	Thanking with intensifier by stating the reason+Praying for goodness
5	Thank you for all the participants for coming to this proposal seminar, I really appreciate it and I hope all the knowledge shared through this seminar will be useful for all of us.	3	Thanking by stating the reason+Expressing appreciate+Praying for goodness
Total of Production		45	

**Table 8. Male Participants’ Responses, and Strategies in Situation 4**

*It’s your proposal seminar day. You thank the participants which also your friends for coming to the room.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	To all of you, thank you so much for attending my proposal seminar.	17	Thanking by stating the reason
2	Thank you all for coming to this proposal seminar. May Allah bless all of us.	10	Thanking by stating the reason+Complimenting
3	Thank you so much for all the participants who attending my proposal seminar.	4	Thanking with intensifier by stating the reason
4	Thank you guys.	4	Thanking
5	Let me express my deepest gratitude to the audiences for your willingness to be here.	2	The expression of gratitude with intensifier by stating the reason
6	Thank you for attending my proposal seminar. I'm sorry that I can't get you anything.	2	Thanking by stating the reason+Apologizing by stating the reason
7	Thank you all for coming here, I really thank you for that. Let's hang out take a coffee or something, bills on me!	1	Thanking with intensifier by stating the reason+Repayment
Total of Production		40	

Tables 7 and 8 describe the Situation 4, which situated the participants in their proposal seminar day. This situation told them to thank the attendees, including their friends, for their seminar. As seen from Table 7, the female participants denote thanking act by stating the reason and compliment the attendees as the common responses in this situation. In fact, the act of complimenting is used very frequently in Indonesian society. In every day of Indonesian, the utterance of thanking is often followed by compliment that reflects the appreciation to someone's efforts regardless of their ages. In some cases, as shown in Table 7, the participants also express their prayer alongside gratitude. Therefore, it is shown here that thanking expression is preceded by the other speech acts sets such as complimenting, praying for goodness, the expression of appreciation, and promising. The possible reason for these thanking strategies is because of the relationship

between the participants and the attendees in the Situation 4 context and the cultural value of Indonesia.

A slight variation of the gratitude expression appeared in the case of male participants. Aligned with Kashdan, Mishra, Breen and Froh's study (2009), males are generally showing less familiar gratitude expression and stating less reason compared to females. This, however, did not prevent both genders to use the strategies. Besides using thanking act with stating the reason, two participants are shown to apply the act of repayment and apologizing to express their gratitude. Few people knew that showing indebtedness in gratitude can make the hearers feel more respected. As in Leech's classification (1983), the illocutionary goal of thanking is defined as appreciation, creating a friendly and polite atmosphere. Thus, the participants in this situation hope that by doing several acts of gratitude, they can create a good relationship with their attendees and friends.

**Table 9. Female Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 5**

*At the 5th floor, you are in a hurry to coming down by using elevator. Right next to you, there is your lecturer who also wants to go down. The elevator can only be filled by one more person. He pleased you to go down first.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Oh no, thank you, Sir. You can go. I'll take the stairs (I'll go after you)	24	Refusing+Thanking+ The expression of diminishing the need for the favor
2	Thank you very (so) much Sir/Ma'am	10	Thanking with intensifier
3	Oh sorry Sir, thank you very much.	6	Apologizing+Thanking with intensifier
4	Thank you kindly, Sir. Please do excuse me.	1	Thanking with intensifier+Requesting
5	You didn't have to do that	1	The expression of diminishing the need for the favor
6	Please take the elevator, Sir. I would take the next one.	1	The expression of diminishing the need for the favor

7	Thank you for your understanding	1	Thanking by stating the reason
8	I appreciate it, thank you for letting me go down first	1	The expression of appreciation+Thanking by stating the reason
Total of Production		45	

**Table 10. Male Participants' Responses, and Strategies in Situation 5**

*At the 5th floor, you are in a hurry to coming down by using elevator. Right next to you, there is your lecturer who also wants to go down. The elevator can only be filled by one more person. He pleased you to go down first.*

Participants' Responses, and Strategies			
No	Responses	Freq.	Strategies
1	Oh no, thank you, Sir. I'll take the stairs instead (I'll go after you)	20	Refusing+Thanking+ The expression of diminishing the need for the favor
2	Thank you Sir/Ma'am	7	Thanking with intensifier
3	I appreciate it, thank you so much Ma'am/Sir.	5	The expression of appreciation+Thanking by stating the reason
4	Oh sorry Sir, thank you very (so) much.	4	Apologizing+Thanking with intensifier
5	Aren't you having a class Sir? If you are, please take the elevators.	2	Questioning+The expression of diminishing the need for the favor.
6	Thank you so much, I'm in a hurry and you pleased me to go down first. Thanks more.	1	Thanking with intensifier by stating the reason
7	I much appreciate your kindness, Sir. Good luck with your business.	1	The expression of appreciation+Good prayer
Total of Production		40	

In the final situation shown in Table 9 and 10, the participants were asked to imagine themselves to have a quite complicated situation between them and their lecturers. The context is when they want to use the elevator in hurry, but the lecturer also needs the elevator for a different destination. The participants were asked to respond to their

lecturer's offer to let the participants use the elevator first.

Interestingly, both genders showed that they tend to refuse the lecturer's offer to use the elevator first. This is due to the participants' concerns about the social status between them and the lecturer, meaning that the lecturer is the respected one. Their responses showed the typical politeness act of Indonesian. In contrast, Hymes (1972) described that a “thank you” in American English is a formulaic expression of gratitude, while in British English, it is used as a discourse marker or a conversational sequencer. He also states that politeness in gratitude expression does not consider indebtedness, relative status, gender, and age. Meanwhile in Situation 5, the social status clearly still noticed by the participants, resulting in them limiting their words in order to be not threatening politeness among the speakers. This is supported by Eisenstein and Bodman (1968), that when gratitude expressions are properly used, they can provide feelings of warmth and solidarity among interlocutors.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study is, first, to investigate the common gratitude strategies used by female and male EFL learners. Second, the researcher wanted to find out how they differ in expressing their gratitude strategies. The researcher has designed five different situations to examine these gratitude strategies based on Eisenstein & Bodman (1993, p. 75-76) study. The findings of this study denote that both female and male EFL learners used mainly the same strategies in accordance with the same culture they embrace as well as the hearers. In further exploration, the data showed the differences in the reason and the frequency of gratitude strategies used by female and male EFL learners. As explained by Holmes (2011), this attitude is caused by the different ways of speaking found in women and men in many communities.

For the last goal of the study, the researcher indicated that gender should not have differences in the process of expressing gratitude. The findings from the current study

showed a contrasting result with others' research that stated females tend to express themselves in their daily interactions. In this study, both females and males have shown the same gratitude strategies as well as the result of Chen et al., (2005) study.

This study also encourages other research to examine some potential issues related. First, the researcher did not find that the teacher could have a significant role in the success of expressing gratitude in English. Thus, English teachers can take DCT as a medium in teaching English gratitude expression to promote speech acts and the functions to students. The teacher also needs to highlight that thanking acts in the Indonesian language are different from the English one. Second, as this study has a limitation in the data collection, further studies are encouraged to be conducted in order to investigate within more aspects such as larger number of institutes and universities with cultural background varieties of each participant. This is to align with Mills (2003), who claimed the possibility of gender in playing a significant role in deciding the appropriateness acts in different situations and the complexity of gender and politeness relationship when comparing different participants' background knowledge in socio-cultural behavior.

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